

Amendments to the Specification

Insert the following paragraph on page 1, line 5:

The present application claims priority from US provisional application No. 60/249,860 filed on November 17, 2000.

Replacement paragraph on page 1, lines 23-35 and page 2, lines 1-2 to correct typographical error:

Currently, the process involved is quite cumbersome, expensive and time consuming. Typically, consultants or sales representatives meet with their customers, laboriously collect the information and convert the information into spreadsheet-based models to identify customer problems or ways of improving the profitability. There are several problems associated with such a process. Usually the data [~~is~~] are not collected in an organized fashion to be useful to better understand the business practices. Moreover, such a data collection conducted by an outsider generally disrupts normal business operation. Employees tend to be either reticent while dealing with a consultant or are reluctant to fully provide requested information. Thus, unless the business manager is willing or able to spend money on a continuing long-term basis, it is too expensive or cumbersome for a business manager to make use of such services. Thus, a need exists for a less cumbersome business process that efficiently addresses the foregoing problems associated with current processes involved in improving business profitability and efficiency.

Insert the following paragraph on page 5 at line 19:

Figure 18 is a flowchart that illustrates steps taking place in generating a customer survey based on customer business data generated by various customers accessing host computer 4.

Replacement paragraph on page 6, lines 25-35 and page 7, lines 1-12 to correct typographical error:

Details of process step 24 are shown in Figure 3A where through a query 106 the identity of customer computer 2 is ascertained by host

computer 4 to determine whether customer computer 2 is a new user computer or a current user computer. To a new user, host computer 4 preferably sends customer computer 2 a downloadable contract, typically utilized in e-commerce that lists the terms and conditions that allow access to the process of the present invention. Through a query 106, customer computer 2, logging on as a new user computer is preferably requested to agree to abide by the contract for availing the services offered by the process of the present invention. If affirmative choice is made, host computer 4 through a step 108 requests customer computer 2 to enter data on a new customer information, which is preferably kept confidential and a notice to such an effect is sent to customer computer 2. Figures 5B and 5C show screen shots of a typical information requested, which may be modified or varied depending upon the business requirement that is being analyzed. Upon completing the data entry of customer information, host computer 4, through a step 110, generates a customer identity data, which, through a step 112, is sent to customer computer 2 for future access. The customer identity data typically includes an account name and a password. For a larger business entity, the account name can include any division or subsidiary of the business entity as well as the region of the country where the division or subsidiary of the business entity is located. Host computer 4 through a step 114 stores the customer information and the customer identity data in a database and allows the new user to access a main menu for business tools 129.

Replacement paragraph on page 15, lines 25-32 to correct typographical error:

To use the sales potential calculator tool you need to set a manpower efficiency target. The manpower efficiency is calculated by adding up the total flag hours for the shop and dividing by the total clock hours that all your technicians were available to work on those jobs during a specified period of time, such as a month or a year. A reasonably acceptable manpower efficiency number to use is 165 as that is an acceptable target to aim for based on industry benchmarks. Facility labor utilization is just the % of the target labor potential that you are currently using.

Replacement formula on page 34, line 2 to correct a typographical error (missing "t" in "cost"):

$$100 \times \frac{\text{Paint \& materials purchase cost}}{\text{Total sales}} \dots\dots (xxx)$$

Replacement paragraph on page 36, lines 17-21 to correct a typographical error:

Sales Process: If your batting average is low then you want to focus on what your estimator needs to do to close more sales. Maybe he needs training, maybe it is a personality issue or he just does not ask for the sale. If you get a lot of jobs that exceed your projections then you may need to add resources to production to meet reasonable goal dates.

Replacement paragraph on page 36, lines 22-27 to correct a typographical error:

Production Process: If ~~[you]~~ your flag hours are low, then there could be some process problems in the shop. If you are consistently late in your delivery performance, you may need to provide more resources to meet the target dates. If you are not meeting daily revenue targets even though you are producing the targeted flag hours, you may not be ~~[focussing]~~ focusing on getting enough parts business. The main issue is not to wait until the end of the month and be surprised.^[?]

Replacement paragraph on page 44, lines 15-32 to provide reference to process illustrated in the newly added Figure 18:

In addition to the foregoing business tools, the process of the present invention also has other uses. For example, substantial amount of the customer business data generated by various businesses accessing host computer 4 is deposited in data storage 12 of host computer 4. Thus, as shown in a step 512 in Figure 18, this information can be processed to generate valuable business profiles of customers accessing host computer 4. For example, organizations, such as insurance companies that pay for auto repairs, or companies that manufacture products, such as paints, or

equipment, such as spray machines, may wish to have a market analysis or survey conducted to generate new business or improve existing business with companies that utilize their products or services. Thus, as shown in a step 514 in Figure 18, the process of the present invention can be used to process the customer business data stored in step 152 to generate a business profile of the customer. The business profile can, as shown in a step 516 in Figure 18, then be modified to generate a customer survey or marketing analysis based on the requirement furnished to host computer 4 by an organization, such as an insurance company, a marketing company or a manufacturer, requesting such a survey or analysis. Finally, as shown in a step 518 in Figure 18, the organization can be furnished the marketing survey or analysis, either through hard copy or through a portal on the internet, which can be accessed by the organization provided with a special identifier.